

## [P. D. Self]

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Folkstuff - Range Lore

Phipps, Woody

Rangelore

Tarrant Co., Dist. #7

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P.D. Self 67, was born on his father's stock ranch in Hood Co., Tex. His father owned about 700 horses, and about 100 head of cattle. P.D. Self rode yearlings and trained horses at 12. He spent most of his life on the range and now owns a hog ranch in Fairland, Burnet Co., Tex. His story:

"I was born on October the 14th, 1871, in Hood County. My father ran a stock ranch about 16 miles Northwest of Granbury, Texas. Now, a stock ranch has hosses and cattle both on it. Dad ran around 700 native hosses on the place, and from 50 to 100 head of cows on it.

"On account of the hosses and cows being around and me liking to be with them, I was riding a hoss as soon as I could sit on one without anybody holding me. Why, I was busting broncs and riding yearlings [b?] the time I was 11 or 12 years old. 12 anyway. Me being so handy with hosses was a help to Dad because he raised them for the Northern markets at that time. You see, a Texas hoss [somwway?] or other, done better in the North than the hosses raised there. In fact, a native Texas hoss even growed [?] more after getting there. The climate seemed to make them grow. I don't know whether or not a hoss

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would grow after he was four or five years old or not, but dad sent them up when they were two [yer?] olds or a little less.

“Dad branded his hosses the same as he did his cows. His name was D.S. Self, and he had SELF branded on each critter's left shoulder. Now, you've heard a lot about brand blotting and so forth, you try your hand at blotting that brand. Just try to change it to something else. You'll see that dad knew his hide burning. C12 - 2/11/41 - Texas 2 Dad was a kind of a quiet fellow. He never was sociable with the other ranchers, nor he never had many folks to come and see him. The only things I ever heard him say about the other ranchers were about their ranges, or water holes.

“He was kind of hard on me though. I said I liked to ride yearlings but everytime he caught me, he raised old billy hell. He said I rode the fat off of them but I never saw any leave them while I was riding so I just thought he was being cranky. I think that was the main reason he taught me to bust broncs. He wanted a vent for my pep, and it was a vent for sure because busting a bronc aint a thing I would reccomend for the rheumatiz.

“It's a thing that has killed many a man and laid many another one up to rest for awhile. You see, if your not set just right when a [ho s?] comes down after taking you up among the clouds, your whole stomach can bust out, or you ribs are likely to break. I want to say right here and now that I believe I led a charmed life while busting broncs because I never had a serious accident, and I never let a bronc go 'til he was broke for sure. I say broke, I mean trained to let a person get on him and ride. You know, a hoss just don't cotton to the idea of going from a life of eating and sleeping, roaming wherever he feels he wants to go, and doing what he wants to do, to having a saddle slapped on him, reigns and bits on him to guide him, and eating and sleeping when somebody gets ready for him to do it. Of course, the hoss can't reason all this [out?] for you but he does hate to lose his liberty.

“I had a system all my own for breaking a hoss. I don't guess it was far from the way others did it but I just gradually 3 led up to getting on him by first roping him to a snubbing

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post, then tying a burlap sack around him about where the saddle straps went. Next, I blindfolded him about every other hour for an hour. Next, I put bits in his mouth and tied the reigns over his neck. This was one of the hardest things to get done but I always overcame the hoss by treating him gentle. The last thing before riding him was to put the saddle on him. The way I'm telling this, it don't sound like there was much work to it but there was plenty, and the hoss kicked about it too.

“Anything new the hoss had to get used to, he would kick and snort and jump anyway you can figure what a hoss could jump. When a man crawled into the saddle, he would get wall eyed for sure. This was a thing I always had to have one other puncher help me do. As soon as the other fellow turned him loose, this hoss would take me on a trip. I heard a fellow talking about a moving stairway taking him up pretty fast one time, he should have tried a moving bronc once. Everything else then gets tame. Another thing, any other trade can get to be just routine to a fellow but busting bronco kills a fellow when it gets so routine that he doesn't study each hoss. When I say study, I mean watch him after he gets something new on him and he is bucking around in the corral. There is three or four different ways of bucking. If a person expects a hoss to buck one way and the hoss goes the other, then the puncher follows the law of gravity because he aint setting on anything. After he gets down, he's got to get away from the hoss because the hoss wants to kill. Many's the hoss that reared up to paw me down but I managed to get out. 4 “Now, about getting them to market. I was too young to go on the trail driven so I can't tell much about them. There was a couple of hard bitten old negroe trail hands that came to the ranch every Spring to go on the drive to Abilene, Kansas, the end of the railroad at that time. I kind of think it was the T.P. but I don't remember well enough to say for sure.

“These old negores were named Jack and Lewis, and they came from the 3 circle [(?)] and the 3 D [(?)], in Clay County. I sure liked to talk to them because they went on a trail drive every year since the things first started. I remember them telling that old man Chisholm never drove a herd up the trail that everybody [th?] thinks he blazed. They said that old man Chisum was the one that went up that trail, and that he blazed several others

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besides. Of the two negroes, Lewis was the meanest and he was always killing hosses. Well, he killed one or two a year by hard riding and bad treatment. Jack forked a hoss named Prince, and that hoss must have realized what a good time he was having because he just followed Jack everywhere he could. Jack was good to him and nearly always had an apple in his pocket for Prince to get out.

"These drives I spoke of had about 300 head of hosses in them. A fellow by the name of Joseph McCoy in Abilene Kansas bought cattle from the cattlemen in the Fall but he bought the hosses for the Montana ranges, and the others along in there. I never went up but I heard others telling about it.

"About the only big cattlemen I ever met while a youngster were Shanghai Pierce, a South Texas cattleman, and [Joel?] Collins, a fellow from down around San Antonio. Collins came close to our 5 place with his trail drive on his way North to take dad's Fall sale cattle with him. I remember him so well because I once asked him where he was from and he said, 'Oh, Anit Goslin'. I thought that was a queer name for a town but Jack told me that it meant 'Round about'.

"Shanghai Pierce was a gambler besides being a stockman. I heard a rumor that he once sent a trail herd North to Kansas City, then met it there. After getting the money, he drank and gambled it all away. That's just rumor but I [kind?] of believe it. I know that he liked to gamble with the boys in the bunk house and he sure didn't allow any sweaters to back him. I got hair in the butter once by backing him and after slapping me over once, it gave me buck fever to even think of it any more. The others told me that Shanghai would just as soon drop a man as take a drink. I found out later that he never drank but it impressed me anyway.

"About this gambling thing, everybody thinks it's a bad thing to gamble nowadays but in those days, gambling was alright as long as it was straight. Everybody gambled fair then.

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A hoss race was a common thing and anybody that didn't bet on the outcome just didn't have any red blood in them.

"All this I've told you happened while I was a young fellow. It seems to me like I never had anything worthwhile to happen to me. Very few people ever realize I know anything about the old range because when I was about 30 years old, I began to get interested in hog raising. My dad's stock ranch got to be a losing proposition along after the 1900's so I didn't inherit anything from him when he died in 1905, but I could see that hoss raising wasn't the thing to do for a living. 6 "I've worked for this fellow and that since I left the old place but as I said I was always interested in hog raising and I now own a hog ranch at Fairland, in Burnet County. I bring most of them to the market here in Fort Worth to sell.

"There is just one thing more about cattle drives I never mentioned that some folks might wonder about. That's the mileage they make while on the drive. Just regular stock cattle make from seven to 12 miles a day, according to the amount of grass along the way and the condition they are in. Steers make from 10 to 15 miles a day, and hosses will make from 20 to 30 miles a day. You can make better time than that but I wouldn't allow anybody to carry my money that fast. You see, the more they are on the trail, the worse they get. That is, they are always changing water, grass, climate, and always on the go, so you can see now what I mean.